

THE ROLES OF COMMUNITIES IN THE EFFECTIVE REINTEGRATION OF
VIOLENT EXTREMIST OFFENDERS IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This research paper examines the roles of communities in the effective reintegration of violent extremist offenders in the Lake Chad Basin countries, including Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. It is important to examine the effectiveness of reintegration in the Lake Chad Basin region, particularly because of its unique context in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration field (DDR). This unique context is unlike traditional DDR environments because of the emerging need to reintegrate individuals during a fragile security environment with an ongoing counterterrorism campaign. This paper utilizes a mixed-methods approach by providing a case study on each of the countries' community roles within reintegration and then by comparing and measuring the cases against one another and against a success and challenge indicator checklist. The goal of comparing these cases and measuring them against the checklists is to showcase the essential components of reintegration programs and the positive roles and pitfalls of communities that may be useful for future effective programming in this emerging field. The results of the case studies prove that communities have not been fully utilized within reintegration programs in the Lake Chad Basin region which has led to ineffective reintegration processes. However, communities in the region have played a large role within informal methods of reintegration. At the same time, communities have played a significant challenging role towards effective reintegration of Boko Haram violent extremist offenders. Based on the findings from the case studies, this paper also includes recommendations to inform of ways communities can be utilized to increase the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs.

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Introduction

At the peak of its violence, Boko Haram, a violent terrorist group active in West Africa, was known as the deadliest group in the world, having killed around 6,600 people in 2014.¹ Boko Haram originated in northeast Nigeria and then spread throughout the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region into neighboring Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (as seen in Figure 1). Throughout history, the border regions of the four countries have experienced increased marginalization, poverty, and an absence of state authority.² These factors helped Boko Haram rise to power and recruit individuals from the Lake's communities, due to their dissatisfaction with the state. Despite many community members joining the group, these communities have suffered significantly at the hands of Boko Haram.³ The Boko Haram conflict has directly impacted over 21 million people, and internally displaced over 2.6 million people within the LCB countries, as of October 2017.⁴ Communities throughout this region have been torn apart and traumatized by the terrorist group. Since its peak in 2015, Boko Haram has suffered many losses due to the region's military campaign against the group, even though the group still remains active. As the group has been experiencing losses, many of its members have become disillusioned and are beginning to leave the group. According to the LCB's Multinational Joint Task Force, it is estimated that around 3,500 Boko Haram violent extremist offenders (VEOs) have surrendered

¹ Idayat Hassan and Justin Tyvoll, *After Boko Haram: Prospects for Transitional Justice in Northeast Nigeria*, report, Center for Democracy and Development, July 2018, [https://cddeibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/After Boko Haram Prospects for Transitional Justice in the North East .pdf](https://cddeibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/After-Boko-Haram-Prospect-for-Transitional-Justice-in-the-North-East.pdf): 8.

² Saibou Issa and Nadine Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates: Perspectives from Far North Region in Cameroon*, report, Global Center on Cooperative Security, February 2019, , <https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/GCCS-PB-Reintegrating-Former-Boko-Haram-Associates-2019.pdf>: 3.

³ *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, report, International Crisis Group, March 8, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/chad/246-fighting-boko-haram-chad-beyond-military-measures>.

⁴ Fonteh Akum, *The Reintegration Enigma: Interventions for Boko Haram Deserters in the Lake Chad Basin*, report, Institute for Security Studies, October 2018, , <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/car13.pdf>: 4.

and are ready to enter reintegration processes.⁵ As of right now, the LCB countries are grappling with how to reintegrate these VEOs within an ongoing counterterrorism campaign against Boko Haram. Community involvement within reintegration programming has proven to ensure the successful reintegration of ex-combatants in the past.⁶ However, in the case of the LCB region, these communities have been deeply affected by the conflict.

Based on the above, this research study aims to explore answers to the following: What role do communities play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs of violent extremist offenders (VEOs) in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries including Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad? For ease of reference, definitions of key terms mentioned throughout this paper are outlined in Appendix 1.

This research study will utilize a mixed methods approach, including examining country case studies and comparing the roles communities have had on the effectiveness of reintegration programming in the LCB countries. In terms of this paper, effective reintegration is defined as when VEOs can rejoin their communities in a safe manner and are able to reintegrate socially, politically, and economically. Effective reintegration also ensures that the needs of the recipient communities, as well the needs of the individual, are considered and met proportionately. A safe manner is defined as the ability of violent extremist offenders to reenter communities without facing violent retribution, as well as the basic security needs of communities are met. This process of effective reintegration also encompasses the success indicators outlined in a checklist in Appendix 2 and the challenge indicators outlined in a checklist in Appendix 3. These checklists will be applied to the case studies of the LCB countries, in order to provide a snapshot

⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁶ Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards, report, United Nations, 2014, [http://unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational Guide.pdf](http://unddr.org/uploads/documents/Operational%20Guide.pdf): 172.

to better understand the role communities can play in the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs in the LCB.

It is important to examine the effectiveness of reintegration in the LCB region, particularly because of its unique context in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration field (DDR). This unique context is unlike traditional DDR environments because of the emerging need to reintegrate individuals during a fragile security environment with an ongoing counterterrorism campaign. Reintegration is typically the most complex component of DDR campaigns, and showcasing this unique security context, including the reintegration of VEOs into conflict-affected communities can shed some light for future DDR interventions in this context.⁷ The goal of comparing these cases and measuring them against the checklists is to showcase the essential components of reintegration programs and the positive roles and pitfalls of communities that may be useful for future effective programming in this emerging field. Based on the findings from the case studies, this paper will also include recommendations to inform of ways communities can be utilized to increase the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs.

Figure 1: Map of the Lake Chad Basin countries⁸

⁷ Saskia Brechenmacher, *Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria: The Reintegration Challenge*, report, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 5, 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/09/05/achieving-peace-in-northeast-nigeria-reintegration-challenge-pub-77177>.

⁸ Al Jazeera, "Chad Troops Kill 17 Boko Haram Fighters after Lake Chad Attack," News | Al Jazeera, September 29, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/chad-troops-kill-17-boko-haram-fighters-lake-chad-attack-180929140628227.html>.



Literature Review

In order to better understand the role of communities in the effectiveness of reintegration programs in the Lake Chad basin countries, we must first look at the broader scope and evolution of DDR literature, as well as the scholarship on the varying roles that communities have played in reintegration programs worldwide. Furthermore, we must explore the existing literature on the reintegration of VEOs within ongoing counterterrorism contexts to better assess how the involvement of communities can affect reintegration processes in this vastly different security environment than which DDR was originally expected to be implemented in. Since the LCB countries are still experiencing ongoing counterterrorism campaigns, it is important to examine the schools of thought relating to reintegration and community involvement within this particular insecure environment in order to assess how communities can play a role in the effectiveness of reintegrating Boko Haram VEOs into their communities.

Traditional DDR School of Thought

After the conclusion of the Cold War and the cessation of many proxy wars globally, the internationalized concept of DDR programming came about with specific guidelines on how to

create an ‘effective’ program.⁹ As conflicts terminated, peace agreements included a DDR component, particularly focusing on state militias of a civil war.¹⁰ Since DDR programs were being enacted once a peace agreement was signed, there was a guaranteed basic level of security within the state, which is vastly different than the environments DDR is currently being implemented in. The disarmament and demobilization portions of traditional DDR interventions concentrated on disarming combatants and breaking down the command and control structures between militias’ rank and file officers.¹¹

However, within this school of thought, scholars and practitioners often neglected the reintegration component of DDR, instead solely focusing on the military aspects of disarmament and demobilization.¹² A significant weakness within these programs was that there was no clear strategy on how to reintegrate ex-combatants back into their communities after demobilization. If reintegration was mentioned at all, it exclusively focused on the ex-combatant as an individual and completely disregarded the needs and opinions of the recipient community. Throughout this school, any methods of reintegration were solely directed on economically reintegrating ex-combatants via providing small stipends, micro-grants, or vocational training, which was often not contextually relevant to the economic needs of the country.¹³ As seen in an article by Kees Kingma on the demobilization of combatants after civil wars in Africa, many programs regarded reintegration support as simply providing a package of cash to assist in their resettlement.¹⁴ By

⁹ Dean Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism," *Center for Security Studies*, June 22, 2015: 1.

¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹ Robert Muggah and Chris O'Donnell, "Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 4, no. 1 (2015): doi:10.5334/sta.fs: 2.

¹² Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism": 3.

¹³ *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Compendium of Projects 2010-2017*, report, International Organization for Migration, 2019, , https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ddr_compendium.pdf: 4.

¹⁴ Kees Kingma, "Demobilization of Combatants after Civil Wars in Africa and Their Reintegration into Civilian Life," *Policy Sciences* 30, no. 3 (August 1997), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1004215705156>: 154.

providing cash stipends and economic assistance to ex-combatants, communities typically began to resent these former fighters as they were seen as receiving unnecessary rewards in a resource scarce environment.¹⁵

Despite the lack of a reintegration focus within the traditional school, many scholars and practitioners would still note that reintegration efforts were the ultimate challenge in the overall DDR process.¹⁶ During the late 1990s, practitioners began to state that DDR programs were not as successful on the ground because of the lack of reintegration planning designed from the beginning. As seen in the case of Namibia, it was assumed that after demobilization ex-combatants would merely return to their communities and pick up the lives they had before the war, which led to zero reintegration planning.¹⁷ At the same time, there is no mention of how the recipient communities, who most likely experienced trauma and atrocities during the conflict, would take in the former combatants. In addition to the lack of reintegration planning, Namibian ex-combatants were provided economic resources after demobilizing, which further exacerbated tensions vis-à-vis the recipient communities.¹⁸ In an article on this case study, Rosemary Preston describes how Namibia was overall seen as a success story of DDR, but this is because reintegration and communities' needs were not seen as essential to its success, instead the effectiveness of the program was measured mainly on the disarmament and demobilization portions.¹⁹

The traditional school provides a basic background on how DDR programs have primarily been designed, including the desire to be implemented in a more peaceful and secure

¹⁵ Ibid, 162.

¹⁶ Ibid, 155.

¹⁷ Rosemary Preston, "Integrating Fighters after War: Reflections on the Namibian Experience, 1989–1993," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 3 (1997): doi:10.1080/03057079708708550.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

environment after a peace agreement. However, this school is completely lacking in contextually relevant reintegration planning, as well as addressing the needs of recipient and conflict-affected communities. At the same time, DDR programming was exclusively a top-down approach with zero community involvement in the process. In addition, traditional DDR was only focused on the economic reintegration of ex-combatants with no regard for the social reintegration of individuals back into their communities, which often led to unsuccessful programs and unintended consequences, such as an intense resentment of ex-combatants for receiving economic assistance. Within this school of thought there is no mention of community involvement or efforts, which showcases that the absence of accounting for recipient communities' needs and ownership can lead to significant issues during reintegration.

Second Generation DDR School of Thought

Along with the international community recognizing the faults of traditional DDR, a second generation of thinking emerged in the early 2000s that shifted the focus more towards the reintegration component and community involvement in DDR. This school of thought was spurred in response to earlier DDR campaigns' inability to effectively implement the reintegration component and in turn not achieving sustainable peace.²⁰ Scholars and implementers began to shift their focus away from only looking at the individual to inclusively looking at communities in hopes of creating an enabling environment for DDR to occur where both the individual and community are beneficiaries of such initiatives.²¹ However, these DDR interventions, including in Sierra Leone and Liberia, still occurred through an official peace

²⁰ Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism": 2.

²¹ Ibid.

agreement, where a basic level of security was achieved prior to implementation. Second generation practices also still aimed to achieve the same goals of traditional DDR which included supporting a peace agreement, creating political spaces, and maintaining a secure environment.²²

A monumental achievement of second generation thinkers was that DDR interventions were now expected to promote reconciliation between soldiers and conflict-affected communities, while at the same time still supporting the economic reintegration of ex-combatants as seen in traditional DDR.²³ The ultimate goal here was to ensure that sustainable peace was being fostered through community reconciliation and restorative justice. Programs began to be designed based on the needs of communities as well as the needs of ex-combatants, which often helped mitigate resentments against those reintegrating and prevented tensions from resurfacing.²⁴ By including communities in the reintegration process, programs were able to build a better sense of trust and reconciliation allowing for an enabling environment for reintegration.²⁵

At the core of second generation thinking is the United Nations Integrated DDR Standards, a document that provides guidelines on DDR programming and discusses the preconditions that are needed to ensure an effective implementation of DDR within peacekeeping environments. These preconditions include a signed peace agreement providing a legal framework, overall trust in the peace process, willingness of parties to comply, and a basic level of security.²⁶ However influential the IDDRS was, and still is, the current conflict

²² Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations: Contribution to the New Horizon Discussion on Challenges and Opportunities for UN Peacekeeping, publication, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Section, United Nations, 2010, , https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2gddr_eng_with_cover.pdf: 3.

²³ Muggah and O'Donnell, "Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration": 2.

²⁴ *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Compendium of Projects 2010-2017*, 5.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations: 4.

environments of the world do not guarantee that these preconditions will exist once ex-combatants are ready to reintegrate. A key takeaway from the IDDRS noted that economic reintegration is helpful, but it is not sufficient enough for sustainable reintegration; instead the IDDRS promoted social and political reintegration, which it referenced as community-based reintegration.²⁷

Overall, second generation thinking attempted to address the many issues with reintegration by promoting the inclusivity of communities in the process, but according to some scholars like Jeremy Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys reintegration was still missing the mark despite community involvement.²⁸ For instance, DDR programs in practice were still pushing ex-combatants into communities with stipends without ensuring that they have a strong social network to reintegrate into.²⁹ They discussed how even though the case of Sierra Leone's DDR program was viewed as highly successful, around 6% of ex-combatants had severe issues reintegrating back into communities.³⁰ When examining the case further they understood this to have been caused by a lack of acceptance by the recipient communities.³¹ This showcases that communities can sometimes have a negative impact on the effectiveness of reintegration. Second generation thinking was impactful in changing how reintegration is implemented on the ground and how the involvement of communities is considered, yet this generation's thinking quickly became outdated to the evolving security environment including that of VEOs, terrorism, and countering violent extremism (CVE).

Third Generation DDR School of Thought

²⁷ Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards, 157.

²⁸ Jeremy M. Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys, "Disentangling the Determinants of Successful Demobilization and Reintegration," *Center for Global Development* 69 (September 2005): , https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/4155_file_WP_69_0.pdf: 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 4.

³¹ Ibid.

As the nature of conflict has changed around the world, a new form of DDR practices and theory emerged that concentrated more on incorporating the expanding issues of terrorism and CVE into DDR interventions. Third Generation DDR shifted the focus from implementing programs after peace agreements towards attempting to simultaneously run programs in a fragile security context, typically while having to reintegrate radicalized individuals back into communities.³² Within this school, the IDDRS is considered outdated, appearing inadequate to tackle the many challenges reintegration was now facing.³³

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies presented its research on lessons learned and limits of DDR in Africa stating that reintegration continues to be the most “complex and critical yet least prioritized facet of DDR”.³⁴ It is generally the phase that most individuals return back to militancy or terrorism.³⁵ Many owe this to implementation delays and the inability of ex-combatants to reintegrate back into their communities. Taking the second generation’s shift towards communities a little further, third generation thinking predominantly focuses on the social reintegration of ex-combatants including rebuilding bonds with recipient communities and increasing community ownership throughout the process.³⁶ This school began to note that in many cases ineffective reintegration was often a result of recipient communities being misinformed, suspicious, or at times outright resistant towards reintegration due to the grave violence they experienced at the hands of these combatants.³⁷

³² Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism": 2.

³³ Muggah and O'Donnell, "Next Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration": 4-5.

³⁴ Prosper Nzekani Zena, "The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa," Africa Security Brief, January 2013, , accessed May 23, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ASB24EN-The-Lessons-and-Limits-of-DDR-in-Africa.pdf>: 1.

³⁵ Ibid, 3.

³⁶ *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Compendium of Projects 2010-2017*, 5.

³⁷ Zena, "The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa," 3.

Notwithstanding the great strengths of the third generation school of thought, many of its scholars struggle with turning their research into policies that can guide successful practice on the ground, particularly with the integration of CVE.³⁸ For example, some have suggested that there needs to be a shift towards incorporating CVE and DDR in programs, while at the same placing communities at the center of the reintegration process of these former VEOs.³⁹ This becomes difficult to achieve in cases of ongoing counterterrorism operations, where governments cannot be transparent with communities due to security concerns. Many scholars within this school of thought argue whether or not DDR programs should also address the push factors that drive individuals to become radicalized and join terrorist groups in the first place, which in turn usually brings up the grievances of the wider community.⁴⁰ This creates a need for a multifaceted approach to reintegration. Scholars Alpaslan Özerdem and Sukanya Podder stress the need to socially reintegrate VEOs via their families and communities which in turn can prevent these individuals from falling back into violent extremism.⁴¹

Despite the adaptability of the third generation school of thought to the current conflict environment, DDR programs are still not necessarily best designed to handle the reintegration of VEOs, due to the lack of clear policy guidance. For example, since ongoing counterterrorism operations are usually occurring simultaneously with reintegration, there is typically a lack of transparency for civilians on reintegration processes. This lack of transparency often causes mistrust by communities and restricts any community involvement. Both the lack of

³⁸ Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism": 2.

³⁹ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁰ *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Compendium of Projects 2010-2017*, 5.

⁴¹ Alpaslan Özerdem and Sukanya Podder, "Disarming Youth Combatants: Mitigating Youth Radicalization and Violent Extremism," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): , doi:10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.3.: 71.

transparency, as well as the nature of terrorist violence, has led to increased stigmas of returning VEOs, in which third generation thinking has not yet identified how best to address.⁴²

Existing Literature on Community Involvement in Reintegration

In order to understand the roles communities can play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB countries, we must examine existing literature on community involvement in reintegration. Scholarship on community involvement in reintegration programs assumes that if the recipient communities participate in the implementation of reintegration programs then it can help reduce misconceptions and stigmas surrounding the return of ex-combatants.⁴³ As seen in the above schools, reintegration programs often do not account for the contextual realities or local practices and often apply one size fits all approaches to different interventions. One form of community involvement is the need to have community reconciliation with ex-combatants during the reintegration process. It is important to utilize traditional and contextually relevant restorative justice methods to ensure that the reintegration of ex-combatants is more successful within that community. Katerina Werkman explains that community reconciliation can often be completed through these traditional ceremonies, as they can support the restoration of relationships, forge cohesion within communities, and even help in the reintegration of ex-combatants as a symbolic acceptance of past wrongs.⁴⁴ For example, in

⁴² Akum, *The Reintegration Enigma*, 11.

⁴³ Stefan Astrom and Bengt Ljunggren, *DDR and Community Based Integration – How to Mitigate Stigmatisation of Former Combatants*, report, Folke Bernadotte Academy, April 2016, , https://fba.se/contentassets/c32c8c19b653446983ba748d844ff800/ddr_brief_final.pdf: 10.

⁴⁴ Katerina Werkman, "Seeking Community Reconciliation Through Traditional Ceremonies," *Central European Journal of International & Security Studies*, February 2014: 126.

Mozambique traditional ceremonies that included rites of purification and cleansing were a key aspect of reintegrating ex-combatants into their communities.⁴⁵

In some cases, the reintegration of ex-combatants into communities can be dangerous for the ex-combatant due to either vigilante justice or violent resentment exhibited by communities. These negative roles of communities often create ineffective reintegration programs since one of the main goals of reintegration is the safe transition of individuals into their communities.⁴⁶

Even though most scholarship recognizes the positive impact of communities on reintegration programs, some argue there is a gray area of how much the community should participate in these processes and what their role should necessarily be.⁴⁷ Due to this, it is important for new scholarship to focus on understanding the role of communities in reintegration of VEOs in the LCB. For instance, community-based reintegration has become a growing interest of DDR practitioners, but there remains little empirical evidence on the elements of community involvement in the social reintegration of ex-combatants, let alone many specific case studies.⁴⁸ Specifically, the concept of reintegration in the security context of terrorism and violent extremism is not a standardized concept in existing literature.⁴⁹

Gaps in Existing Literature and Correcting these Shortcomings

As discussed throughout the literature review, reintegration is considered the most critical part of DDR programming, yet it is the least prioritized when implementation occurs, often not

⁴⁵ Ibid, 117.

⁴⁶ Christina Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village: An Action Agenda on the Role of Civil Society in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Those Associated With and Affected by Violent Extremism*, report, Global Center on Cooperative Security, August 2018, https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GC_It-Takes-a-Village_WEB.pdf: 1.

⁴⁷ Meredith Rossner and Jasmine Bruce, "Community Participation in Restorative Justice: Rituals, Reintegration, and Quasi-Professionalization," *Victims & Offenders* 11, no. 1 (2016): doi:10.1080/15564886.2015.1125980: 108.

⁴⁸ Oliver Kaplan and Enzo Nussio, "Community Counts: The Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Colombia," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, March 1, 2012, doi:10.2139/ssrn.2138188: 133, 135.

⁴⁹ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*:1.

accounting for contextual realities and local needs.⁵⁰ Existing literature does not provide clear guidance on how to reintegrate individuals into communities in practice, specifically VEOs, which in turn has led to ineffective approaches on the ground, sometimes resulting in worse-case scenarios.⁵¹ At the same time, current reintegration methods often do not recognize the importance of involving communities into programs to ensure the effective social reintegration of VEOs.⁵² This paper will aim to examine the role communities play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs of Boko Haram VEOs in the LCB countries. Based on past literature, it is clear that community involvement and ownership can play an impactful role, however existing literature is severely lacking on guidelines on how to integrate these VEOs into communities that were impacted by terrorism and its destabilizing consequences. In addition, this paper aims to add specific case studies and assessments of the LCB countries' reintegration programs to better understand how conflict-impacted communities are involved in VEOs' reintegration in the region. In hopes of adding contextually relevant research to existing literature on the gaps of reintegration research of VEOs in the LCB, this paper will enable program implementers to be able to better incorporate communities within the process and capitalize on their positive roles within reintegration programs to ensure more effective programming.

Hypothesis and Methodology

Based on the above gaps in the existing literature, this research study aims to explore the following: What role do communities play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB countries including Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad?

⁵⁰ Zena, "The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa," 1.

⁵¹ Piedmont, "The Role of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Countering Violent Extremism": 2-3.

⁵² Özerdem and Podder, "Disarming Youth Combatants: Mitigating Youth Radicalization and Violent Extremism".

This research question will be examined through a mixed methods approach of examining individual country case studies and then comparing the impact communities have on effective reintegration programming in the LCB region. For this paper, effective reintegration is defined as when VEOs can rejoin their communities in a safe manner and are able to reintegrate socially, politically, and economically. Effective reintegration also ensures that the needs of the recipient communities as well the needs of the individual are considered and met proportionately. A safe manner is defined as the ability of violent extremist offenders to reenter communities without facing violent retribution, as well as the basic security needs of communities are met. This process of effective reintegration also encompasses the success indicators outlined in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 outlines indicators that challenge the effectiveness of reintegration programming. The case studies will focus on each of the LCB countries' Boko Haram reintegration programs and initiatives, as well as highlighting the existing roles of communities in the reintegration process, both positive and negative. Besides looking at country reintegration programs, each case study will also include information on civil society-led reintegration programs. By examining these reintegration programs and any form of community involvement, we can better understand the roles communities might play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs in the region, as well as in the process of reintegrating VEOs.

In order to further assess the effectiveness of communities' roles in reintegration processes, each case study will then be compared in the discussion section, as well as measured against both the success and challenge indicator checklists (found in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively) constituting of common successes and challenges for reintegration programs in terms of communities' roles and involvement in the processes. These checklists were created based on previous scholarship, included above, and case studies of other reintegration programs'

experiences, as well as what the international community has professed as key guidelines and standards for reintegration and community-based reintegration. Indicators are inclusive of both positive and negative indicators that involve communities in reintegration processes and lead to either effective or ineffective programming. These checklists solely focus on community involvement indicators, as is within the scope of this research study. These checklists will be applied to the case studies in Appendix 2 and 3 to provide an overall snapshot in order to better understand the role communities can play in the effectiveness of reintegrating violent extremist offenders in the LCB. The ultimate goal of comparing these case studies and measuring against the checklists is to showcase the essential components of reintegration programs and the positive roles and pitfalls of communities and governments that may be useful for future effective programming in this unique and emerging DDR field of reintegrating VEOs in a fragile security context.

As seen in the above literature review, communities have proven to play an essential role in the success or failure of reintegration programs. However, this research study's hypothesis suggests that the involvement of communities is not being properly utilized or acknowledged within reintegration programs in the LCB countries, which has most likely led to ineffective reintegration programs of VEOs in the region. It is predicted that communities will play varying roles in each of the respective countries and that communities will also exhibit some significant challenges towards the effective implementation of reintegration programs. With the ever-changing conflict dynamics and the difference in applying traditional DDR programs to the reintegration of VEOs and counterterrorism contexts, community involvement within reintegration programs may face significant roadblocks. It is expected that the LCB countries are not accounting for the success indicators of community involvement in their reintegration

programs. If the predicted hypothesis is wrong, it is expected that we will see that communities have had an entirely positive role on the effectiveness of reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB countries and that these countries have incorporated more of the success indicators than challenge indicators.

Data

Below are the individual case studies on each of the LCB countries' reintegration programs and initiatives. Each case study focuses on the role of communities in the reintegration processes in hopes of better understanding how they might factor in the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs in the LCB region.

Case Study on Nigeria

As the epicenter of the Boko Haram conflict, Nigeria has been significantly impacted by the violence inflicted on communities by the terrorist group. In the past, Nigeria has implemented DDR programs for militants in the Niger Delta region. These programs, however, were ineffective as they only provided economic assistance to ex-combatants and failed to recognize the needs of affected communities.⁵³

In 2016, Nigeria created Operation Safe Corridor (OSC), a rehabilitation and reintegration program focused on reintegrating low-risk VEOs.⁵⁴ This program is the only method for VEOs to leave the terrorist group and to be guaranteed reintegration, however the caveat is that they must be categorized as low-risk after surrendering to authorities. OSC provides programs such as psycho-social support, vocational training, and religious

⁵³ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 5.

⁵⁴ Brechenmacher, *Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria*.

reeducation.⁵⁵ After its first 16-week program, 95 VEOs are currently ready to reintegrate back in communities, yet there is a stall in implementation.⁵⁶ Despite being called a reintegration program, OSC does not have a clear reintegration strategy, which has led to a lack of support from communities and also a creation of fears from politicians that they will face intense backlash on pushing VEOs into these communities.⁵⁷ Since reintegration is supposed to ensure the safe transition of VEOs back into communities, these VEOs are just waiting as the Nigerian government believes they will most likely face violent retribution upon return.⁵⁸

In addition, this program has been critiqued by communities for its lack of transparency, as well as secrecy surrounding its reintegration guidelines, which there are none.⁵⁹ The details on the initial screening process determining high or low risk are unclear to communities, but they know that high risk VEOs are sent to military detention and low risk VEOs are sent to rehabilitation and reintegration programs.⁶⁰ The lack of transparency, due to security reasons, creates massive distrust towards the process from the recipient communities.⁶¹ The Nigerian government has mentioned it may try a general amnesty program for VEOs, but it has received feedback from communities that victims must be provided for ahead of VEOs.⁶²

Also, OSC does not provide services for women and children. Another Nigerian program for reintegration is focused on reintegrating women and children VEOs in Maiduguri.⁶³ Through

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Omar S. Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*, report, Institute for Security Studies, July 2018, , <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018-07-06-research-report-1.pdf>: 21.

⁵⁷ Brechenmacher, *Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria*.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Bulama Bukarti, "Making Peace with Enemies: Nigeria's Reintegration of Boko Haram Fighters," War on the Rocks, March 26, 2019, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/03/making-peace-with-enemies-nigerias-reintegration-of-boko-haram-fighters/>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

this program, around 1,800 women and children have been reintegrated back into communities, however they often face extreme stigmatization.⁶⁴

Roles of Nigerian Communities

Nigerian communities have played multiple roles in the reintegration processes, mainly through informal methods. One ad-hoc role communities have been playing in reintegration efforts is conducting traditional approaches and ceremonies of reconciliation and forgiveness. For example, the Sawari method is common in the Borno region, in which community leaders come together to collectively discuss whether a VEO can reintegrate based on the grievances and needs of the community as a whole.⁶⁵ A positive outcome of this method is that women VEOs have been able to reintegrate back into communities through arranged marriages that attempt to build social ties.⁶⁶ These traditional methods of reconciliation are common for Nigerian communities and allow them to play an active part in the ad-hoc reintegration processes. In a survey, 56% of community members suggested that they believe that VEOs can reconcile with victims and reintegrate into communities.⁶⁷ Throughout this survey, results showed that more positive responses on reintegration came from communities that experienced a lower rate of violence.⁶⁸ Communities also described potential methods that VEOs can achieve reconciliation and community acceptance, which included asking the community for forgiveness, asking forgiveness from God, and swearing an oath forgoing violence.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Vanda Felbab-Brown, "In Nigeria, We Don't Want Them Back", May 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/in-nigeria-we-dont-want-them-back/>.

⁶⁵ Hassan and Tyvoll, *After Boko Haram*: 23.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 16.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Based on the growth of ad-hoc community initiatives for reintegration, civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nigeria have played an active role in empowering communities to take positive stances and ownership on reintegration. With a gap in psycho-social support for victims of the conflict, a CSO called Carefronting worked to build the capacity of communities to act as first responders to cases of Boko Haram trauma.⁷⁰ After this initiative, the CSO created a training manual for communities to knowledge-share methods of forgiveness and community reconciliation, assisting in the reintegration of VEOs.⁷¹ Another initiative that communities played a part in was a project by the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Through a WANEP project, local police and communities were trained in Nigeria on best practices of reintegration, through informal community dialogues.⁷² These dialogues allowed communities to express their hesitations towards the reintegration of VEOs, which led to sensitization campaigns for communities to better understand the overall benefits of reintegration.⁷³

On the other hand, communities have played a challenging role to the reintegration of VEOs in Nigeria. In a different survey, around 40% of Nigerians within polled communities said they would never accept VEOs, whereas many others said it was just too soon to reintegrate as the conflict is ongoing.⁷⁴ These communities' main concern was that current reintegration programs offer exemption to VEOs' crimes and offer no justice for the victims.⁷⁵ Due to the extreme violence experienced in Nigeria and the military's inability to stop it, vigilante groups

⁷⁰ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 16.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, 20.

⁷³ Ibid, 20.

⁷⁴ *Through Our Eyes People's Perspectives on Building Peace in Northeast Nigeria*, report, Conciliation Resources, April 2018, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Through our eyes - peoples perspectives on building peace in northeast Nigeria.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Through%20our%20eyes%20-%20peoples%20perspectives%20on%20building%20peace%20in%20northeast%20Nigeria.pdf): 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 8.

rose up within communities to protect populations and fight Boko Haram. Members of vigilante groups such as the Civilian Joint Task Force have expressed that they feel that VEOs are receiving more support than they are.⁷⁶ The idea of violent retribution upon return to communities is a major hindrance towards reintegration in Nigeria.

Of those VEOs that have returned to their communities, specifically women and children have faced intense stigmatization and rejection from recipient communities.⁷⁷ These women and children are often seen by communities as a threat to the safety of its members who might become radicalized by them.⁷⁸ On the community side, women community members in Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno regions showed that they are less likely to be willing to accept the reintegration of VEOs than their male counterparts.⁷⁹ This may be due to the increased violence women faced at the hands of the terrorist group. Another issue for reintegration has been that communities are often not informed that VEOs were returning ahead of their arrival, which only further fueled stigmatization and a lack of community acceptance in Nigeria.⁸⁰ Many Nigerians do not like the OSC program and view it as providing for VEOs while not supporting the needs of those communities suffering.⁸¹ Within this program there is a strict focus just on VEOs and not on preparing the communities to be adequate recipients of reintegration processes.

Case Study on Cameroon

Cameroon's Far North region has been the area most impacted by Boko Haram in the country. Its population has a history of being marginalized and living in extreme poverty, which

⁷⁶ Mahmood and Ani, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*: 21.

⁷⁷ Brechenmacher, *Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria*.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

made communities very susceptible to Boko Haram's growing influence.⁸² The Far North region is the most populated within Cameroon, as well as the poorest with around 74.3% of the population living in poverty.⁸³ In terms of formal reintegration programming, Cameroonian government initiatives have been small in comparison to Nigeria. Up until 2017, the government's approach to combatting Boko Haram did not include any reference to reintegration planning even though VEOs were attempting to return to their communities.⁸⁴ Many VEOs were captured on the battlefields and immediately placed in overcrowded Cameroonian prisons, such as in Maroua and Yaounde, awaiting to see whether there would be any judicial proceedings.⁸⁵ Throughout the beginning of the conflict, videos and news spread throughout communities showing Cameroonian security forces killing women and children because they were accused of being in Boko Haram.⁸⁶

During 2018 through a presidential decree, the Cameroonian government set up a National Committee for DDR (CNDDR), whose main goal is to "provide a framework for the reception and social reintegration" of both Boko Haram VEOs and other militants in the country supporting the Anglophone crisis.⁸⁷ Along with the creation of CNDDR, President Paul Biya announced that VEOs who surrendered would be pardoned and reintegrated if they laid down all arms.⁸⁸ These VEOs are referenced as 'former fighters' or 'former associates' within

⁸² Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 6.

⁸³ "Helping Those Affected by Boko Haram to Get Back on Their Feet - Nigeria," ReliefWeb, August 24, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/helping-those-affected-boko-haram-get-back-their-feet>.

⁸⁴ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 6.

⁸⁵ *Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group, August 14, 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/263-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-nouveau-chapitre-dans-la-lutte-contre-boko-haram>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Cameroon: Committee to Reintegrate Ex-separatists, Others," Africanews, December 03, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.africanews.com/2018/12/03/cameroon-committee-to-reintegrate-ex-separatists-and-others/>.

⁸⁸ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 6.

Cameroon.⁸⁹ The CNDDR's mandate has been to create a way forward and to begin building centers for reintegration, specifically one in Mora for VEOs.⁹⁰ These centers have experienced significant construction delays, which has overall slowed down the reintegration process.⁹¹ Critics say that Cameroon's CNDDR is poorly structured to reintegrate the increasing number of VEOs returnees.⁹² Even though Cameroon finally developed a reintegration process, there is little evidence that the committee prioritizes community involvement and the use of traditional restorative justice mechanisms that can enable the transition of VEOs back into their communities instead of further saturating prisons.⁹³

Roles of Cameroonian Communities

Despite the delay in forming an official reintegration program, Cameroonian communities have played many ad-hoc roles in creating informal reintegration processes. For example, Cameroonian communities have been utilizing traditional ceremonies of restorative justice, in which former VEOs publicly swear on a Quran confessing the atrocities they committed and renouncing all allegiances to Boko Haram.⁹⁴ Some VEOs desperately wanted to reintegrate back into communities and began to approach traditional rulers and family members to help them negotiate their reentry back into the community in the absence of a clear government process.⁹⁵ This has been occurring in large numbers, such as when 70 low-risk VEOs reintegrated back into their communities after they conducted the public ceremony.⁹⁶ This

⁸⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁹⁰ "Cameroon: Committee to Reintegrate Ex-separatists, Others," Africanews.

⁹¹ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 5.

⁹² Claude Biao, "What Are the Perspectives of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme in Cameroon?" Stake Experts, January 08, 2019, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://stakeexperts.com/en/perspectives-of-the-disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-program-in-cameroon/>.

⁹³ *Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group.

⁹⁴ "Helping Those Affected by Boko Haram to Get Back on Their Feet - Nigeria," ReliefWeb.

⁹⁵ *Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

role in reintegration showcases the communities' active participation in creating contextually relevant initiatives of reintegration in the place of the government. However, some community members have expressed that this type of public ceremony does not reduce their suspicions of VEOs.⁹⁷ Some communities have been upset that VEOs appear to be getting off easy for their crimes and that the traditional ceremonies are not enough for what victims have endured within the conflict.⁹⁸

Another significant role was initiated by the Cameroonian CSO Local Youth Corner Cameroon who established a program to build the capacity of youth to become agents of reintegration within communities.⁹⁹ This program empowered youth to lead sensitization radio campaigns that encouraged communities to support reintegration processes and dispel misconceptions.¹⁰⁰ This initiative is important because it utilizes youth in a positive way, unlike how Boko Haram targets youth to join its ranks. According to a UNDP assessment on community-based reintegration, Cameroon showcased a wider acceptance of reintegrating VEOs than the other LCB countries, especially in terms of reintegrating women and children.¹⁰¹

Even with the positive initiatives by communities, there have been some challenging roles exhibited by communities in terms of reintegration. Due to the lack of reintegration planning before 2017, many VEOs tried to defect from Boko Haram in Cameroon, but they were ultimately rejected by their communities upon return and sometimes even killed onsite by Cameroonian military forces, such as in the case of Kolofata.¹⁰² Reintegration has become a

⁹⁷ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 5.

⁹⁸ Mahmood and Ani, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*.

⁹⁹ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 26.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin*, report, United Nations Development Program, May 2018,

[https://www.undp.org/content/dam/nigeria/docs/LCBGF2018/Discussion Paper \(6 May 2018\) - EN.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/nigeria/docs/LCBGF2018/Discussion%20Paper%20(6%20May%202018).pdf): 13.

¹⁰² *Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group.

difficult task due to intense suspicions towards VEOs by Cameroonian communities.¹⁰³ For instance, in 2017 the leader of a group of 100 Boko Haram VEOs approached a traditional ruler in Mayo-Moskota for help on their reintegration, but was ultimately rejected by the local community.¹⁰⁴ Even orphaned children of VEOs are often not welcomed back into communities despite the insistence of traditional rulers.¹⁰⁵

After Cameroon announced its reintegration plan, traditional rulers conducted awareness campaigns on reintegration in their communities.¹⁰⁶ However, they experienced intense pushback from communities who do not want to accept VEOs or are afraid them. Those VEOs who are accepted back into communities are often shielded from others, in fear that they will experience violent retribution at the hands of community members.¹⁰⁷ Similar to Nigeria, this is particularly true in Cameroon with the rise in vigilante justice. In terms of reintegration some community members in Maroa, stated that they were willing to kill returning VEOs if the government and security forces would not.¹⁰⁸ Many vigilante groups emerged to fill the gaps of the state in the Far North, which may cause difficulties when attempting to reintegrate VEOs back into communities side by side with members of these informal security groups.¹⁰⁹

Case Study on Niger

As Boko Haram's violence and influence spread across the LCB region, Niger's bordering region of Diffa began to feel the terrorist organization's impact. Many owe the rise of Boko Haram in Diffa to the absence of state authority and to the fact that its communities have

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ "Helping Those Affected by Boko Haram to Get Back on Their Feet – Nigeria".

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

had a long history of being marginalized from the centralized government in Niamey.¹¹⁰ As the conflict began to spread closer to the capital, the Nigerien government issued a state of emergency, blocking motorcycle travel and the use of the Lake Chad and Komadougou river in the Diffa region, which angered communities who now were hindered economically within an increasing humanitarian crisis.¹¹¹ This pushed communities, especially youth, to become more susceptible to the influence of the extremist group and to become further disillusioned with the Nigerien government.

It is important to note that throughout its history, Niger has successfully implemented other post-conflict DDR programs such as reintegrating Tuareg ex-combatants, preventing a violent secession unlike its neighbor Mali.¹¹² For example, according to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, from 2006-2007 Niger was able to demobilize and reintegrate around 3,160 individuals.¹¹³ However, from this number it is not evident the extent to which these individuals reintegrated effectively according to this paper's definition.

In terms of its Boko Haram reintegration programming, Niger announced in 2016 that it would begin to offer amnesty to those VEOs who would forgo radicalization and violence; in turn around 200 VEOs surrendered and now are being housed in a facility in Goudoumaria, Diffa.¹¹⁴ Based on the previous work of the Diffa region's governor, Mahamadou Lawaly Dan Dano, Niger's High Authority for Peace Consolidation set up a deradicalization and reintegration program at a camp in Goudoumaria for these Boko Haram VEOs defectors.¹¹⁵ Instead of facing

¹¹⁰ *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, International Crisis Group.

¹¹¹ "Boko Haram Brought Terror to Niger. Can a Defectors Program Bring Peace?" The Washington Post, November 20, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/world/wp/2018/11/20/feature/boko-haram-brought-terror-to-niger-can-a-defectors-program-bring-peace/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d35601b0574e.

¹¹² Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 8.

¹¹³ Zena, "The Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa," 4.

¹¹⁴ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 6.

¹¹⁵ Akum, *The Reintegration Enigma*, 8.

imprisonment like those captured by the Nigerien military, VEOs in Goudoumaria are promised food, security from retribution, deradicalization initiatives, and the ability to participate in programs that aim to ensure their successful reintegration back into communities.¹¹⁶ These VEOs are locally referenced as repentant or rehabilitated.¹¹⁷ Some believe that the amnesty program was established in Niger because the President recognized that many individuals, especially youth, joined Boko Haram because of the extreme poverty and underdevelopment in the border regions of Lake Chad.¹¹⁸ As of writing, it is very unclear whether any of the 200 VEOs in Goudoumaria have been reintegrated into their communities.

Unlike the other LCB countries, Niger is the only country that systematically sorts all VEOs in custody to better understand their level of involvement in the terrorist organization.¹¹⁹ This has resulted in those VEOs who have surrendered being sent to Goudoumaria or those who have been captured going to prisons and awaiting trials. Those VEOs that were captured by the Nigerien military, which amounts to almost 1,300 individuals, have been transferred to prisons throughout Niger.¹²⁰ The vastly different number of VEOs in Goudoumaria to those awaiting trial has lessened the number of those Nigerien VEOs willing to surrender from Boko Haram, in fear that they will not receive true amnesty guaranteed by the government.¹²¹ However, the Nigerien government and judicial system has been hesitant to remove the process of detention for VEOs because they do not want to appear to the public as not recognizing the atrocities that victims have suffered.¹²²

Roles of Nigerien Communities

¹¹⁶ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 6.

¹¹⁷ Akum, *The Reintegration Enigma*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 6.

¹¹⁹ Akum, *The Reintegration Enigma*, 8.

¹²⁰ Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 6-7.

¹²¹ Ibid, 7.

¹²² Ibid.

Nigerien communities, particularly those living in the most impacted region of the conflict, have taken on varying roles throughout the reintegration process. Firstly, the government's reintegration program came about because of the previous work of the Diffa governor. Dan Dano was actively working in the conflict-affected communities in the region to help create buy-in amongst community members for the reintegration of VEOs.¹²³ Subsequently through his important work with communities, the High Authority for Peace Consolidation developed 'peace committees' that included mayors, traditional rulers, religious leaders, and other community members that meet to discuss important information regarding the ongoing military operations against Boko Haram, as well as how this impacts communities.¹²⁴ These forums provided opportunities for communities to express any major concerns about the ongoing counterterrorism operations and the threat of Boko Haram in their communities, while at the same time building local buy-in between the communities and the local government authorities.¹²⁵ This was very innovative as the presence of state authority has been very absent in the Diffa region.

As seen in the above example, traditional rulers and religious leaders hold significant power in all matters concerning Nigerien communities. One important role of communities in the reintegration of VEOs in Niger has been the exhibited through the role of traditional rulers. For example, in order to promote reconciliation and healing between returning VEOs and recipient communities, Nigerien traditional rulers have organized collective prayers, which aimed for both communities and individuals to come together and find strength in prayer and religion to

¹²³ Obi Anyadike, "How Jobs Can Help Niger Win the War against Boko Haram," *The New Humanitarian*, April 16, 2019, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2017/07/17/how-jobs-can-help-niger-win-war-against-boko-haram>.

¹²⁴ Mahmood and Ani, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*: 20.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

overcome the challenges both faced in terms of reintegration.¹²⁶ Traditional rulers have been essential in disseminating information on the reintegration of VEOs and assessing the needs of the communities who have experienced trauma at the hands of these fighters.

Nigerien communities have also played a role through CSOs. A Nigerien CSO entitled Communautaire pour la Paix et la Promotion du Vivre Ensemble (COPAVE) conducted a study examining the best practices of DDR and community reconciliation from Cote d'Ivoire's civil war, in order to mirror these successes in the program in Diffa.¹²⁷ A key observation from this study was that the reintegration program needed to have a focus on communities' needs to ensure that they also benefit from reintegration efforts.¹²⁸ Afterwards, COPAVE began working with the National Human Rights Commission and Ministry of Interior to develop a reintegration action plan with the help of local traditional rulers to enhance the participation and ownership of communities in the process.¹²⁹ This initiative not only brings community leaders to the forefront of planning and designing reintegration programs, but it also integrates community needs alongside those of the VEOs. However, it is unclear as to whether the reintegration action plan was ever formulated.

Under a grant with the University of Diffa, some Nigerien academics have implemented programs to enhance communities' role and ability in creating an enabling environment for the reintegration of VEOs. After a symposium occurred, inclusive of traditional, religious, and other community leaders, participants recognized the need to sensitize recipient communities in the Diffa region on the topic of community reconciliation.¹³⁰ With support of the grant, 60

¹²⁶ *Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin*, report, United Nations Development Program: 16.

¹²⁷ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 23.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 33.

community members of the region were trained on the knowledge and best practices of reintegration, in hopes that they would go on to spread awareness to others in their communities.¹³¹ The idea of knowledge-sharing and spreading awareness on reintegration processes has proven to be useful in dispelling misconceptions as well as encouraging transparency between government run program and communities during times of ongoing counterterrorism campaigns.

Despite the positive community roles mentioned above, there has been reports that many community members in Goudoumaria and the wider Diffa region are still resistant about the eventual reintegration of VEOs despite the multiple efforts to raise awareness and community acceptance.¹³² Originally, many community members were upset with the location of the camp near their homes, and some expressed that there is a perception that VEOs are receiving rewards, including economic assistance, whereas their communities are suffering from poverty.¹³³ This hesitancy by communities will most likely remain a significant challenge for the reintegration process in Niger. Another challenging role that Nigerien communities play in the reintegration process is that some Nigerien communities are so ingrained with the Boko Haram insurgency that they live side by side with active VEOs, many who still live with their families.¹³⁴ This is described as a result of a not having a legitimate whistle-blowing policy where community members could report VEOs and Boko Haram supporters who live within their community and not face a violent reaction.¹³⁵ This complicated role of communities showcases how Boko Haram gained significant power while integrating within these communities in the periphery regions.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Issa and Machikou, *Reintegrating Former Boko Haram Associates*, 7.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Overall in Niger there has been a slow implementation process of reintegration and many of the VEOs who have surrendered are not receiving what they have been promised.¹³⁶ A key issue for the effectiveness of this program has been gaining local support for reintegration from the conflict-affected communities.¹³⁷ The Nigerien government has begun to strive to encourage outreach and awareness campaigns on the program in order to lessen discontent from local populations but it is yet to be seen how successful these efforts are.¹³⁸

Case Study on Chad

From the outset of the conflict, the impact of Boko Haram in Chad was limited, until around 2015 when Chadian forces began supporting the military intervention in neighboring countries.¹³⁹ Since the rise of Boko Haram, terrorist attacks in Chad have killed hundreds of people, internally displaced around 100,000 individuals, and destroyed most of the economy in the Lake region.¹⁴⁰ Similar to Niger, the impact of Boko Haram has reverberated mainly in communities throughout the periphery Lac region of Chad, but it has never experienced the same levels of Boko Haram violence as its neighbors.¹⁴¹ Traditionally, this area of the LCB had a growing economy based in agricultural and fishing. The Lac region of Chad is not as geographically remote from state power as is the case with the other LCB countries, however this region still experienced marginalization throughout its history with the Chadian President visiting the lake for the first time ever in 2015.¹⁴² In the past, Chad has initiated multiple DDR programs including interventions focused on reintegrating child soldiers. For this program, with

¹³⁶ Ibid, 7-8.

¹³⁷ Mahmood and Ani, *Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods*: 21.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, International Crisis Group.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

the support of international partners, Chad conducted reintegration by providing payments of \$830, psycho-social support, and vocational training for each individual.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the program was ineffective as many child soldiers returned to militancy.¹⁴⁴

In terms of current reintegration programming for VEOs, Chad is struggling on implementing a formal deradicalization and reintegration strategy.¹⁴⁵ Compared to the other LCB countries, Chad has focused more on a military approach to fighting the terrorist group and has faced difficulties in implementing any softer components including strategies on reintegrating VEOs.¹⁴⁶ Despite not having a reintegration program, Chad experienced an increase of surrenders in 2016 from Boko Haram, which amounted to 1,000 people mostly who were women and children.¹⁴⁷ Of this number, 300 men are awaiting trial in the Baga Sola camps and the women and children have returned to their communities.¹⁴⁸ It is unclear whether these women and children have successfully reintegrated into their communities based on the definition of effective reintegration in this paper. The Chadian government's main reaction has been to imprison these male VEOs without clear guidance on when trials will occur. In addition, around 1,000 VEOs are currently detained in the "Chadian Guantanamo" located in Koro Tore, where they are awaiting trials.¹⁴⁹ International organizations have been pushing Chad to enact a reintegration plan and stressed that communities need to be a part of the design and planning phases in order for it to be effective.¹⁵⁰

Roles of Chadian Communities

¹⁴³ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*:6-7.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid 7.

¹⁴⁵ Bukarti, "Making Peace with Enemies: Nigeria's Reintegration of Boko Haram Fighters".

¹⁴⁶ *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, International Crisis Group.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Chadian communities have taken on varying roles, specifically in terms of the informal reintegration processes. According to an International Crisis Group report, the Chadian government suggested that it was having less issues of reintegrating 1,000 former Boko Haram VEOs because the recipient communities had not been impacted by violence as much as those communities in Nigeria or Cameroon.¹⁵¹ However, this is very vague as it is unclear how many individuals have successfully reintegrated in Chad without a clear reintegration plan in place. Many of the VEOs returnees in Chad have been women and children. Chadian district administrators worked with their local communities, mainly throughout the Bol district, raising awareness and encouraging communities to welcome back these individuals.¹⁵² However, the same cannot be said for male VEOs looking to reintegrate in Chad.

Communities played an additional role through a CSO entitled Youth Association for Peace and Non-Violence who initiated a program called “Sensitizing and Reinforcing Community Capacity in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of VEOs”.¹⁵³ Through this program, the organization trained traditional rulers, religious leaders, and youth and women’s groups on the importance of reintegration and how the community can prevent recidivism in this process.¹⁵⁴ A positive outcome of this program was that CSOs were also trained to knowledge-share in Chadian communities on how reintegration works and to provide opportunities to discuss this subject.¹⁵⁵ In a UNDP assessment with community focus groups, Chadian communities mentioned that family ties were the central component to be included in any future form of

¹⁵¹ *Cameroon’s Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group.

¹⁵² *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, International Crisis Group.

¹⁵³ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 22.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

dialogue and reconciliation process of reintegrating VEOs.¹⁵⁶ Throughout this process, around 400 individual community members received training.¹⁵⁷

Despite the roles mentioned above, Chadian communities have played a largely challenging role with the government in terms of reintegration processes and instances relating to the VEOs. Even though district leaders have been raising awareness on reintegration, traditional rulers have also been experiencing violence by both Chadian state authorities and Boko Haram based on intimidation to see where their allegiance lies, or to see whether they are working with the terrorists, which resulted in the death of one traditional leader.¹⁵⁸ To avoid being accused of being complicit with Boko Haram, many traditional rulers and religious leaders have vowed on Qurans in front of local governments to showcase their allegiance.¹⁵⁹ This mistrust from the Chadian government towards the communities is spurred from the belief that they are possibly harboring terrorists.¹⁶⁰ For example, the former governor of the Bol district reportedly allowed a suspected Boko Haram pregnant women to stay in his house, which led to him being removed from his position.¹⁶¹ At the same time, communities near the Lake are extremely skeptical of state authorities which may hinder any community influence on the potential reintegration process.¹⁶² This mistrust also allowed Boko Haram to increase its influence within this region of Chad. Because of this dual wariness, it is unlikely that communities will be open to work with the government and vice versa.

¹⁵⁶ *Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin*, report, United Nations Development Program: 16.

¹⁵⁷ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*:22.

¹⁵⁸ *Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures*, International Crisis Group.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Due to increased levels of internally displaced people throughout the Lake region, Chadian communities have experienced a growth in communal violence and tensions over existing resources and over suspected allegiances with Boko Haram.¹⁶³ Particularly, the Buduma ethnic group has faced increased stigmatization from other communities because of the rumor that they are complicit with Boko Haram.¹⁶⁴ After the suicide attack in Baga Sola market in 2015, some Buduma women were beaten up once it was announced that the suicide bomber was from this ethnic group.¹⁶⁵ Inter-communal tensions may hinder a uniformed role of communities in supporting reintegration processes in Chad. Based on this assessment, it is clear that potential reintegration of VEOs into recipient communities may face some backlash due to stigmatization that they are cooperating or welcoming terrorists. However, the Chadian government has failed to establish a clear reintegration plan even though thousands of VEOs are ready to begin the reintegration process.

Discussion

Based on above case studies, each of the LCB countries has approached reintegration differently, and communities have played a variance of roles in these processes. The predicted hypothesis is correct that the involvement of communities is not being fully utilized or capitalized upon within reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB countries, which has led to less effective programming. This can be seen as the case studies are applied to the indicator checklists in Appendix 2 and 3 based on the success indicators and challenge indicators of community involvement. As seen in the case studies, communities have been playing a larger role in the reintegration process through more informal methods via leading community

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

members such as tribal and religious leaders, as well as through CSOs. The role of communities within government-led programming was less evident in the case studies. In addition, as predicted, communities also played a significant challenging role towards the effective implementation of reintegrating VEOs in their countries.

In order to further examine the hypothesis, we must compare the above case studies as the LCB countries have experienced varying roles by communities within the reintegration of VEOs. As seen throughout the cases, communities played a small, almost non-existent role, within government-led programs on the reintegration of Boko Haram VEOs in all of the LCB countries. Communities in Niger seemed to have played the largest role in the government's reintegration program of Goudoumaria, especially since the initiative was inspired by the Diffa region's governor. Niger also had empowered key community leaders to take part in peace committees which attempted to build a connection from the communities to the government on key matters relating to Boko Haram, including reintegration. Despite there being a presidential decree on reintegration, there is little evidence that Cameroonian communities have played any official role via government-led programs on reintegration. In Nigeria, communities have had an impact on the OSC program, however this has been mainly through resistance due to the lack of transparency and distrust for not having a clear reintegration strategy. Lastly, Chadian communities played no role in this regard, as the Chadian government has not established an official reintegration program of Boko Haram VEOs. This proves that the involvement of communities has not been fully utilized or even acknowledged within reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB region. This can be further seen in Appendix 2 that the LCB government programs have not utilized or acknowledged communities' roles in reintegration to a large

extent. The failure to include communities into formal reintegration processes means that the lack of community support can potentially derail the entire DDR program.¹⁶⁶

However, as seen in the case studies, communities have played a more significant role informally in the reintegration of VEOs, increasing the effectiveness of this process. A major theme across the region was that communities played a role in initiating traditional ceremonies or restorative justice mechanisms to assist in the reintegration processes of VEOs. As seen in Nigeria and Cameroon, traditional ceremonies such as the Sawari method and swearing on the Quran have eased the reintegration of some VEOs. However, some community members have expressed their doubts in these methods. In addition, communities have played a major role via traditional rulers. In Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, traditional rulers have been at the forefront of building bridges and easing tensions between recipient communities and those who are reintegrating. To a lesser degree, traditional rulers have been less successful in Chad due to the skepticism from the government that they might be complicit with Boko Haram. Lastly, the case studies showed that local CSOs were a major component of community involvement in reintegration processes, as well as in building communities' capacity to ensure effective reintegration. This is not surprising as CSOs have proven to have the most direct engagement with communities and have a history of building bridges between the government and communities.¹⁶⁷ As seen in all four countries, CSOs have worked directly with communities on disseminating information, creating sensitization campaigns, building the capacity for reintegration, and providing psycho-social support for victims and perpetrators. These informal

¹⁶⁶ *Through Our Eyes People's Perspectives on Building Peace in Northeast Nigeria*, report, Conciliation Resources, 7.

¹⁶⁷ Nemr et al., *It Takes A Village*: 3.

roles have filled the gap of community involvement within government-led programs and in turn have increased the effectiveness of informal reintegration processes.

Despite these varying roles, communities have played a largely challenging role to the effective reintegration of VEOs in the LCB region. There are many reasons as to why this is occurring. For example, often communities are less likely to trust those who are reintegrating during situations of ongoing conflict.¹⁶⁸ In addition, communities are the ones who set the rules of who belongs and does not belong in their community.¹⁶⁹ At the same time, reintegration programming must not forget that these communities experienced extreme violence at the hands of Boko Haram throughout this conflict and to this day.¹⁷⁰ Due to these reasons, communities have played a largely resistant role against reintegration. Communities in Nigeria and Cameroon, where most vigilante groups emerged during the conflict, have suggested that VEO returnees will face violent retribution when attempting to reintegrate because of the crimes they committed. This has stalled reintegration in both countries. Throughout the LCB region, communities have expressed that the needs of the victims need to be addressed before reintegrating VEOs, which has created further roadblocks to effective reintegration. In Chad, communities have been experiencing an increase in communal, ethnic violence over alleged allegiances with Boko Haram, hindering the ability to accept VEOs into communities. In addition, communities often stigmatize reintegrating VEOs, such as affiliated women and children, which has led to ineffective reintegration according to this paper's definition. This significant role of limiting the effectiveness of reintegration can be seen in Appendix 3.

¹⁶⁸ Brechenmacher, *Achieving Peace in Northeast Nigeria: The Reintegration Challenge*, report, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

¹⁶⁹ Christina Nemr and Rafia Bhulai. "Civil Society's Role in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Related to Violent Extremism." IPI Global Observatory. June 25, 2018. Accessed May 23, 2019.
<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/06/civil-societys-role-rehabilitation-reintegration-violent-extremism/>

¹⁷⁰ *Cameroon's Far North: A New Chapter in the Fight Against Boko Haram*, report, International Crisis Group.

Overall, the varying roles of communities within the reintegration of VEOs in the LCB showcases the importance of better understanding the roles of communities in the effectiveness of reintegration ex-combatants into this new unique context. Assessing the positive and negative roles of communities in this process can assist practitioners and governments to be able to develop methods and mechanisms to enhance the role of communities in the reintegration of VEOs within fragile security contexts with ongoing counterterrorism campaigns. Some limitations with these case studies are that each LCB was impacted vastly differently by Boko Haram and these communities' range in different contexts and variations. No community is the same so it is difficult to showcase every communities impact on reintegration even within the same country.

Recommendations

Based on the above case studies that focused on the reintegration of VEOs in the LCB countries and the respective roles of communities in these programs, we can propose some recommendations. These particular cases, occurring in a unique DDR context, allow us to inform future programming and devise methods that communities' roles can be utilized to improve and enable effective reintegration of VEOs in a similar context. These recommendations are particularly focused on the roles of communities. The following recommendations should be taken into consideration in order to increase the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs in the LCB countries:

- LCB countries, in partnership with community leaders such as tribal and religious, should conduct widespread awareness campaigns with communities on the ongoing reintegration processes of Boko Haram VEOs in their country. These awareness campaigns should include sensitization methods and should be as

transparent as they can be in the midst of ongoing counterterrorism operations. A key aspect of building awareness is also dispelling the misconception that VEOs are receiving rewards over the victimized communities, however this must go hand in hand with development projects for the conflict-affected communities and victims. The main goal of these campaigns is to gain buy-in and support from the communities, as well as raise awareness and clarify any misconceptions on the reintegration processes that the government is conducting. There is a potential that some communities will not want to participate. If this is the case, potentially the government could work with community members that are willing to collaborate in hopes of empowering them to become agents of change for the larger community;

- Simultaneously, LCB country governments should work to build strong partnerships with recipient and conflict-affected communities in order to build a multi-faceted approach to reintegrating VEOs. Governments should utilize and capitalize upon the positive roles that communities have been exhibiting in reintegration processes, as discussed above. Communities should be empowered to have key roles in the reintegration of Boko Haram VEOs, however this must first begin with involving communities in the decision-making process on reintegration. At the same time, it is essential for men, women, and youth community members to have an active role in this process, in order to engage and incorporate the needs of the entire community. The main reason for this is that if

communities are involved in the implementation of reintegration from the decision-making point then they would be less likely to be resistant ¹⁷¹;

- As seen in the case studies, CSOs have played an active role as enablers of reintegration and community reconciliation between communities and reintegrating VEOs in the LCB countries. It is recommended that LCB governments work in unison and collaborate with CSOs, whose innovative initiatives are already supporting reintegration. This will also remove the duplication of efforts and streamline all reintegration activities. In addition, LCB governments and international partners should work to build the capacity of these CSOs, who are at the forefront of reintegration and working directly with the local communities; and
- Throughout previous DDR interventions, communities have proven to be an essential component in the successful reintegration of ex-combatants. Due to this fact, it is important for the capacities of communities to be built in order to become agents of creating an enabling environment for reintegration. Training can be provided to community leaders and members of communities to enable them to become recipients of reintegrating VEOs.

Conclusion

This research study aimed to better understand the roles communities play in the effectiveness of reintegration programs of VEOs in the LCB countries by utilizing case studies of the four countries and comparing the impact these roles have had on the effectiveness of

¹⁷¹ Astrom and Ljunggren, *DDR and Community Based Integration – How to Mitigate Stigmatisation of Former Combatants*, report, Folke Bernadotte Academy: 10.

reintegration programming in the LCB. It is important to examine the effectiveness of reintegration in this region, particularly because of its unique security context of the need to reintegrate individuals during an ongoing counterterrorism campaign and the extent that communities have been impacted by the violence exhibited by Boko Haram. Based on these case studies, there are some evident roles communities have played in the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs, such as playing a larger role in informal reintegration processes than formal government-led programs. Also, communities have played a largely resistant role to reintegration for many reasons. The implications of these outcomes showcase how the LCB countries can reform their programming to be more inclusive of communities and how they can capitalize upon existing local-led reintegration initiatives, such as traditional mechanisms, to increase the effectiveness of reintegration. With hopes of informing future programming, these case studies shine light on the essential components of effective reintegration programs and the way communities can be utilized to increase the effectiveness of reintegrating VEOs.

Appendix 1: Terms and Definitions (alphabetical)

Community-Based Reintegration: A type of approach to reintegration that provides greater inclusion of all social actors through the involvement of family members and communities of return in addition to the ex-combatant caseload. This approach supports ex-combatant reintegration as a component of wider community security, reconciliation, recovery, and development. In addition, it provides communities with the tools, training, and means to support and join the reintegration process.¹⁷²

Disarmament: The collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population.¹⁷³

Demobilization: The formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose. The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.¹⁷⁴

Effective Reintegration: Reintegration is considered effective when ex-combatants or violent extremist offenders can rejoin their communities in a safe manner and are able to reintegrate socially, politically, and economically. Effective reintegration also ensures that the needs of the recipient communities as well the needs of the individual are considered and met proportionately. This process of effective reintegration also encompasses the success indicators outlined in Figure 2. A safe manner is defined as the ability of violent extremist offenders to reenter communities without facing violent retribution, as well as the basic security needs of communities are met.

Reintegration: The process by which ex-combatants (or violent extremist offenders as in the case of this paper) acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility and often necessitates long-term external assistance.¹⁷⁵

Violent Extremist Offenders (VEOs): In terms of this paper, VEOs are defined as those individuals (men, women, boys, and girls) who were associated with the terrorist organization Boko Haram and are in the process of attempting to reintegrate back into their communities. For ease of reference, this category will encompass individuals who were forced into the terrorist

¹⁷² Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards, 160.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 25.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

group, as well as those who voluntarily joined. Each of the Lake Chad basin countries references this group with a different name and it will be mentioned in each of the case studies.

Appendix 2: Indicator Checklist on Successes of Community Involvement in Implementing Effective Reintegration Programs Through Formal and Informal Methods

Success Indicator	Nigeria		Cameroon		Niger		Chad	
	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
Safe transition of VEOs into communities								
Community acceptance of VEOs								
Psycho-social counseling provided for VEOs and victims within the community		X						
Community involvement in addressing grievances		X				X		
Building the capacity of communities to receive VEOs, including awareness and sensitization campaigns, and providing tools to support reintegration		X		X	X			X
Programs attempt to achieve a balance of addressing the needs of the community and of VEOs					X			
Programs contain a restorative justice approach inclusive of informal and/or traditional justice mechanisms		X		X	X			
Rebuilding social bonds between the community and VEOs				X		X		
Programs account for the varying needs of men, women, boys, and girls both of	X			X				

VEOs and communities								
Community ownership and/or involvement in the reintegration process		X		X	X			X

Appendix 3: Indicator Checklist on Challenges of Community Involvement in Implementing Effective Reintegration Programs

Challenge Indicator	Nigeria	Cameroon	Niger	Chad
Increased levels of community resentment and stigma towards VEOs	X	X	X	X
Communities interfering with the reintegration of VEOs	X	X		X
Communities' lack of knowledge on reintegration process leading to misconceptions	X			X
Perceptions of appropriate punishment of VEOs does not match communities' expectations	X	X		
Economic assistance to VEOs at the expense of the communities	X		X	
Communities' needs not acknowledged or incorporated within programs	X	X	X	X
Safe transition of VEOs into communities is unlikely	X	X		X
Lack of community involvement or ownership throughout the reintegration process	X	X		X
Programs do not account for variance in the needs of men, women, boys, and girls both of VEOs and communities		X	X	X
Lack of transparency about government run reintegration programs of VEOs with the communities	X			
Programs do not include a social reintegration component	X			X

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